

Department of Public Safety Driver and Vehicle Services
Motorcycle Road Guard - Public Hearing Panelist
Professional Experience, Training and Background

Panelist Bio-sketches

Joseph Newton – 651-201-7170

Department of Public Safety, General Counsel and Rules Coordinator

Mr. Newton has held his position for 9 years. Prior to that, he was an Assistant Attorney General in Minnesota.

Patricia McCormack - 651-201-7580

Director, Driver and Vehicle Services, Department of Public Safety

Ms. McCormack has been the director for over seven years, serving as Driver Services Program Director previously for six years. She served on the American Association of Motor Vehicles Administrators Board for 6 years, ending her term in the fall of 2013.

Helen Bassett – 651-201-7583

Department of Public Safety, Driver and Vehicle Services, Rules and Legislation Coordinator

Ms. Bassett has functioned as a state-level program administrator for 11 years. Ms. Bassett has over 25 plus years of direct public service, at agencies including the University of Minnesota, the Minnesota Department of Health, and the City of Minneapolis. Her background includes public safety communications; juvenile justice programming, law-enforcement based juvenile diversion programming; systems coordination between vital records, the courts, child welfare, child support and adoption; and, community-based violence prevention and survivor services advocacy.

Donna Berger – 651-201-7061

Director, Office of Traffic Safety, Department of Public Safety (DPS)

Ms. Berger serves as the Governor's Highway Safety Representatives and coordinates Minnesota's participation in the National Highway Safety Administration's (NHTSA) State and Community Highway Safety Grant Program. Ms. Berger is a 32- year employee at DPS, with 8 years in Office of Traffic Safety (OTS) serving as director the last two and half years.

Debra Carlson -651-201-7624

Driver Exam Program Manager, Department of Public Safety, Driver and Vehicle Services (DVS)

Ms. Carlson manages driver license exam and driver education, and is a 25-year employee of the agency.

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Kenneth Johnson – 651- 234-7386

Work Zone Engineer, Minnesota Department of Transportation

Mr. Johnson represents the Minnesota Department of Transportation as the State Work Zone, Pavement Marking & Traffic Devices Engineer. He has worked at the Department for over 21 years in a variety of areas and has 7 years of experience in Traffic Engineering. He is a Professional Engineer and a Professional Traffic Operations Engineer.

William (Bill) Shaffer 651-201-7075

Bill Shaffer Program Administrator, Minnesota Motorcycle Safety Program (MMSP)

Mr. Shaffer has administered the program for seventeen years; providing training for novice and experienced riders. During this time, the MMSP has trained over 115,000 motorcyclists in rider training courses. He is also a Motorcycle Safety Foundation certified Rider Coach. Bill began riding motorcycles in 1971 at age ten and obtained a motorcycle license endorsement at age sixteen. He currently rides a Triumph Bonneville.

Major Nancy Silkey

Minnesota State Patrol

Twenty five (25) years law enforcement experience, including serving as a State Trooper – providing: traffic safety enforcement; crash investigation and instruction; emergency response; public assistance; education; support to allied agencies; and crash reconstruction; Leadership as a Lieutenant in first line supervision and Captain, as District Commander Currently serving as a Major, and responsibilities include: oversight of agency district operations and special operations sections; Legislative Liaison; Agency Compliance to Data Practices Law; Leading Agency Personnel. Major Silkey’s motorcycle riding experience began in 1986.

Lt. Robert Zak

Minnesota State Patrol

State Trooper – eleven (11) years; Field Training Officer (4 years); Lead EVOC driving instructor (8 years); Motor Unit trooper (5 years); Motorcycle rider for 26 years, including 5 years as a motor officer. Lt. Zak has conducted many group rides on motor including: Led March of Dimes “Bikers for Babies” (75 to 150 motorcycles); Assisted St. Paul Harley Davidson’s “Lightning Run” (1,000 to 2,000 motorcycles); MN HOG rally rides (250 to 1,000 motorcycles); Various cancer awareness fund raiser rides (100 to 300 motorcycles); Funeral escorts for fallen officers and military members; Lead many VIP/dignitary details including Sen. John McCain’s motorcade detail during the 2008 RNC. Training includes: Basic riders course; Advanced riders course; Northwestern University Police Motor Officer course; Monthly group motor officer training included group rides with intersection control; Learned what works well and what does not work well regarding traffic/intersection control – no “leapfrogging”. Road guards stay put and are “used”; they go to the back of the ride. Law Enforcement knowledge, training and experience about safely controlling traffic at intersections Currently, Lt. Zak is serving as Lieutenant – Director: Fleet & Asset Management.